

Martensen's Jacob Böhme.¹—Jacob Böhme, shoemaker, theosophist, Teutonic philosopher, was one of those strange combinations of simplicity and profundity, ignorance and genius, attractiveness to some and repulsiveness to others, which appear at intervals to puzzle mankind. Those who would dismiss his "stupendous reveries" with a contemptuous smile can hardly have taken into account how many powerful minds and pious souls have been profoundly impressed by his teaching. Besides the great German thinkers, such names as those of Sir Isaac Newton, King Charles I., William Blake, John Byrom, and above all, William Law, all of whom were, more or less, admirers of Böhme, are enough to show that his writings at least deserve respectful consideration. We therefore give a cordial welcome to the English translation of Bishop Martensen's *Studies* of this extraordinary man's life and writings. Only those who have attempted to grapple with Böhme's full works, either in the original or in the English translation, can appreciate the debt of gratitude which we owe to Dr. Martensen for his clear, thoughtful and appreciative summary and criticism of the theosophist's life and writings. Nor must we forget to thank the translator who has given us the great prelate's valuable work in an English dress. Mr. Evans, by the way, has fallen into the common error of attributing the English translation of Böhme's works to William Law. It is true that the translation is described as his; but as a matter of fact, he had nothing whatever to do with it, and he would certainly never have allowed it to be printed, for he always regarded Böhme as "caviare to the general." The real translator was probably a Mr. Ward, and it was published, some time after Law's death, at the sole expense of his disciple, Mrs. Hutcheson. It is obviously impossible within our limits to give even the briefest sketch of Dr. Martensen's work. He has wisely given only 16 out of 344 pages to the "Life;" for it is the writings, not the life, of Böhme which are the best subjects of "study," and in those writings he has picked out, with wonderful acumen, just those points which are most salient and interesting. We would only caution the reader not to be discouraged by the fact that he will find a hard nut to crack at

¹ *Jacob Böhme: His Life and Teaching; or Studies in Theosophy.* By the late Dr. Hans Martensen, Metropolitan of Denmark. Translated from the Danish by T. Rhys Evans. Hodder and Stoughton, 1885.

first. The most difficult to understand, and, in our opinion, the least interesting part of the *Studies*, is the first section: "God and the Uncreated Heaven." When we come to the second section, "God and the Created World," we enter upon a subject which is not only more intelligible in itself, but also one in which Böhme gives us more valuable and tenable suggestions. "No philosopher," writes Dr. Martensen, "has given a truer and more profound explanation of evil than Böhme;" and few have written more suggestively on the Fall, the Atonement, the Wrath of God, and other kindred topics to which no thoughtful person can be indifferent.

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Note on The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, Chapter xi.—I venture to suggest an emendation in a clause of acknowledged difficulty. The whole passage runs thus: *πᾶς δὲ προφήτης διδάσκων τὴν ἀλήθειαν, εἰ ἂν διδάσκει οὐ ποιεῖ, ψευδοπροφήτης ἐστί. πᾶς δὲ προφήτης δεδοκιμασμένος, ἀληθινός, ποιῶν † εἰς μυστήριον κόσμικὸν † ἐκκλησίας, μὴ διδάσκων δὲ ποιεῖν ὅσα αὐτὸς ποιεῖ, οὐ κριθήσεται ἐφ' ἑμῶν μετὰ Θεοῦ γὰρ ἔχει τὴν κρίσιν· ὡσαύτως γὰρ ἐποίησαν καὶ οἱ ἀρχαῖοι προφήται.*

For the words marked † . . . † I would conjecture τὰ (?) εἰς μαρτύριον κόσμιον.¹ In support of this conjecture, the following points seem worth considering:—(1) It is in *general* harmony with the context. Two types of prophetic character are presented which are evidently intended to be contrasted. The first prophet teaches well, but his actions give the lie to his teaching. The second orders his own actions, that *the Church may have an honest report*, but his teaching fails in practical effect. The former is self-condemned; the latter is left to God's

¹ Readers of the *EXPOSITOR* (May, 1885, p. 397) may remember Dr. Marcus Dods' interpretation of this clause. He supposes the reference to be to "the declaration of future and as yet hidden historical movements. . . . A prophet calls the Christian people together that he may indulge in apocalyptic rhapsodies." This very ingenious and attractive interpretation appears open to some objections. (1) The connexion of clauses is not satisfactory. We should have expected *ποιῶν δὲ . . . καὶ μὴ διδάσκων*. (2) *ὅσα αὐτὸς ποιεῖ* is left without anything in the previous context to refer to, *δεδοκιμασμένος* and *ἀληθινός* pointing to official and not personal character. (3) *ποιῶν*, though somewhat prominent in the sentence, is in sense divorced from *οὐ ποιεῖ* in the preceding and from *ποιεῖν ὅσα αὐτὸς ποιεῖ* in the succeeding context.